PREVENTABLE DISEASES.

DIPHTHERIA.

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE CENTRAL BOARD OF HEALTH OF THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.

Read this carefully, and keep it for future reference.

Additional copies of this and other Pamphlets on Preventable Diseases may be obtained GRATIS by application to the Secretary of the CENTRAL BOARD OF HEALTH, 30 St. James St., Montreal.

AC901
P3
no.1326
PARK

National Library of Canada
Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

DIPHTHERIA.

Diphtheria may be met with any where, but it is a matter of experience that it exists, often in a most malignant form, in houses badly built and badly kept, in those in which fresh air and sunlight do not have free access, in those with damp cellars and defective drainage. Diphtheria also prevails in localities where the water supply is unwholesome.

Diphtheria is an infectious disease.

It is a well established fact that diphtheria is catching, that is to say, a patient suffering from it can communicate disease to a healthy person, either by contact with the emanations or discharges of the patient or by the inhalation of infected

air or by the drinking of fluids contaminated by their discharges.

The infection can be carried about from one place to another in articles of clothing, or of food (milk more especially), or by anything which has been exposed to contagion in the sick room.

Children under the age of ten are the most likely to catch the disease, and it is amongst them that it is most dangerous. Grown up persons are liable to attack. No one can afford to neglect the preventive measures which science and experience have taught.

Preventive Measures.

1. Every one who is suffering from a cold or sore throat should take particular care that all his surroundings are in a thoroughly sanitary condition.

2. When diphtheria is prevalent in a locality, public gatherings in ill ventilated rooms, theatres, public halls, even churches, should be avoided. This is a matter of very great importance more especially in cold and damp seasons.

3. There should be perfect ventilation and the

utmost cleanliness in the rooms in which children sleep as well as in the schools or convents which they may be attending.

4. No case of sore-throat, no matter how trivial it may appear, should be neglected. The family doctor should see the patient at once and give an opinion as to the nature of the disease.

5. The breath of persons suffering from sore-throat of any kind is likely to be a source of danger if inhaled by healthy persons. The kissing of such patients is highly dangerous.

6. A child should never be allowed to come into contact direct or indirect with a patient suffering from diphtheria.

7. Keep your house in a condition of absolute cleanliness. Be certain that the drainage thereof is in perfect order.

The treatment of the Patient.

Whenever diphtheria breaks out in a family the most energetic measures must be taken to prevent the spead of the disease to others. Such measures are as necessary in diphtheria as in smallpox, or scarlet fever.

1. THE PATIENT MUST BE SEPARATED FROM THE REST OF THE HOUSEHOLD.—He must be put in a room on the topmost flat of the house, if possible in one at the end of a passage.

All carpets, curtains, articles of dress, pictures, etc., etc., not absolutely needed by the patient, must previously be removed. There should be plenty of sunlight and good ventilation. The patient's bed should be placed in the centre of the room.

2. All discharges from the throat, nose or mouth of the patient should be received on rags and these should then be immediately burnt.

3. The discharges of the bowels as well as the urine of the patient should be received in a vessel containing a solution of sulphate of iron (ordinary copperas) according to formula No. 3, and then should be thrown immediately into the water closet, or should there be no water closet, they should be buried in the ground at a distance of 100 feet at least, from any well or other source of water supply.

4. Clothing, bed linen, towels, etc., which have been used by the patient, should, immediately on

removal, be dropped into a bucket or tub containing the zinc solution (formula 4) and should be allowed to soak in this fluid for some time before being taken out of the room.

5. No one must enter the sick room except those absolutely necessary to the care of the patient and those persons should wear clothing that can be frequently changed and, after disinfection, washed in boiling water.

6. No article of food or drink which has been once in the sick room should be used by any other person, and the cups, plates, forks, spoons, etc., which have been used by the patient, should be thoroughly cleansed and disinfected before being taken into use by the other members of the household.

After complete recovery, the patient should be given at least one bath in hot water and should be given a complete change of clothing before leaving the sick room and mixing with healthy persons.

When diphtheria breaks out in a household, no member of that household should be allowed to attend school, or college, or to take part in any

public assembly or to attend the services of the church. These measures of isolation should be strictly put in force during the whole course of the disease, until recovery or death having occurred, the sick room or better still, the whole house has been properly disinfected under the superintendence of the health officer or of the medical man in charge of the case. When death occurs, the body should be immediately enveloped in a shroud soaked in the zinc solution (formula 5), and placed in a hermetically sealed coffin which must not on any account be afterwards opened.

THE FUNERAL MUST BE STRICTLY PRIVATE AND ON NO ACCOUNT WHATEVER MUST CHILDREN BE ALLOWED TO TAKE PART IN IT.

DISINFECTION.

After recovery or death, all articles used by the patient during the illness, as well as the sick room and its contents, or, better still, the whole house should be disinfected by the vapour of burning sulphur. For this purpose, close all the doors,

windows, chimneys and other communications with the external air, paste paper over all cracks or crevices through which the vapour might escape. Spread out upon chairs and tables all the clothing, blankets, bed-linen, mattresses, etc., which have been used by the patient, or in fact any articles which may have been exposed to infection. In a tub half full of water place some bricks, on which rest an iron vessel containing live coals, put some ordinary roll sulphur (formula 7) on the hot coals. Lastly let the room or house remain closed for the space of 24 hours.

Disinfectants.

The best disinfectants are fresh air and sunlight in abundance, the two can never be dispensed with.

In cases of illness it is necessary also to have recourse to the following disinfectants which have been found to be the most efficacious while at the same time they are the most simple and the least expensive.

No. 1. Chloride of lime solution.

Chloride of lime, one pound. Water, two to four gallons.

This solution is one of the most efficacious disinfectants and may be used in place of the copperas or the zinc solutions. It is also very useful for disinfecting the air of the sick room as well as that of the house generally. With this object place open vessels containing the solution in the various rooms particularly in the sick room.

Chloride of lime solution should be freely used in the disinfection of cellars, privies, water-closets, drains, yards, stables, etc.

No. 2. Solution of corrosive sublimate.

Corrosive sublimate	1 ounce
Permanganate of potash	1 ounce
Water	8 gallons.

This is an excellent disinfectant and can be employed in all cases where chloride of lime solution is recommended. Being corrosive it must not be allowed to stand in metallic vessels. Cor-

rosive sublimate is a poison, but the purple colour of this preparation ought to prevent its being mistaken for any other. It should not therefore be put into use, except under the direction of a medical man.

No. 3. The copperas solution.

Sulphate of iron (copperas), one pound
Water, a gallon.

This solution may be advantageously prepared by suspending in a large barrel of water, a basket containing about sixty pounds of copperas. This solution should be frequently and freely used for the disinfection of cellars, privies, water closets, cesspools, sewers, stables, etc.

No. 4. The zinc solution.

Sulphate of zinc (white vitriol), one pound and a half. Common salt, three quarters of a pound. Water, six gallons.

No. 5. The concentrated solution of zinc.

Sulphate of zinc (white vitriol), three pounds. Common salt, a pound and a half. Water, six gallons.

No. 6. Disinfectant and Antiseptic Powder.

Chloride of lime, one pound. Corrosive sublimate, one ounce. Plaster of Paris, 9 pounds.

Reduce the corrosive sublimate to powder, mix it with the plaster of Paris. Then add the chloride of lime and mix all three well together. Keep in a dry place. This powder is an excellent disinfectant for the discharges of the sick as well as for privies and cesspools. For this purpose it is merely necessary to sprinkle it over the matter whether in vessels or in pits.

No. 7. Sulphur fumes.

Roll sulphur.

Two to four pounds are sufficient for a room about ten feet square. See page 11.

No. 8. Labarraque's Solution.

Labarraque's Solution, one pint. Water, a gallon and a half.

Labarraque's solution may be used with advantage in place of the carbolic acid.

N. B.—The best disinfectants are chloride of lime, corrosive sublimate, heat, sulphur fumes, and

when properly employed these agents surely destroy the germs of disease. Others are useful for delaying or arresting decomposition, but do not prevent the spread of disease itself.